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Healthy Urban Living and Ageing in Place (HULAP): Physical activity, built environment and knowledge exchange in Brazilian cities: Study Protocol.

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Background

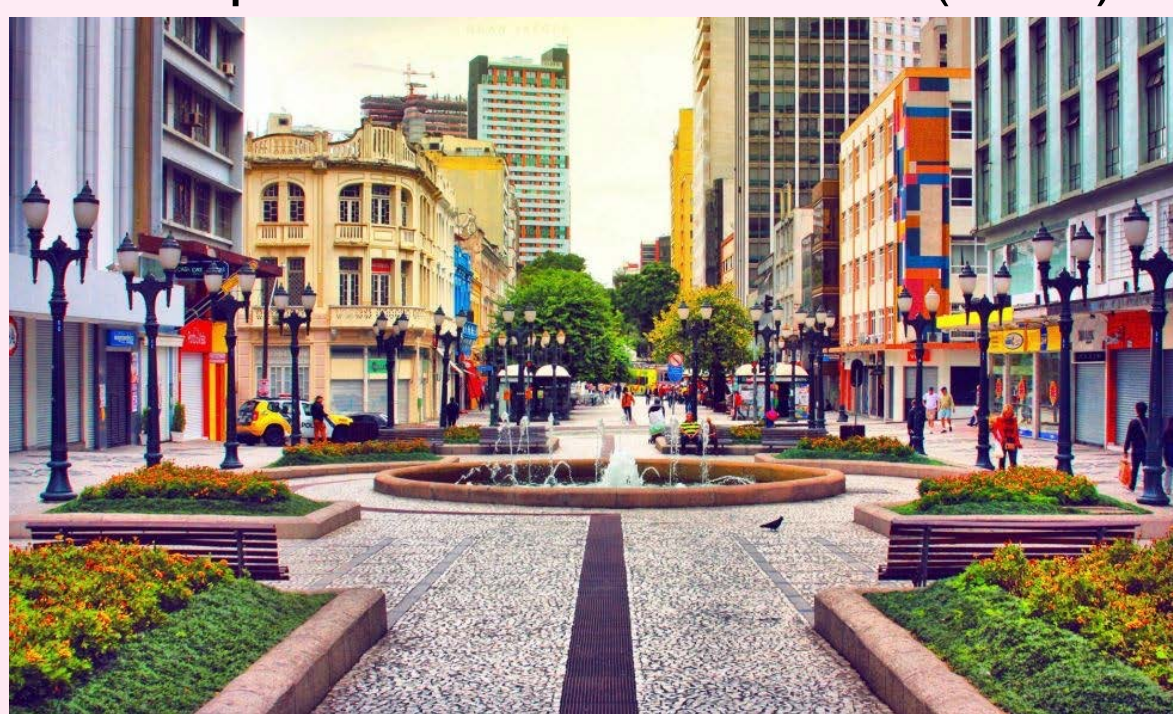
Healthy urban ageing is a global issue. Non-communicable diseases are a public health priority and there is a need to focus on the rise of these diseases and scale-up programmes, policies and actions to address physical inactivity. A major concern relating to healthy urban ageing is the rapid social and built environment changes exposing vulnerable populations (low socio-economic status, older adults and women) to lower levels of physical activity (PA) due to motorised transportation, urbanisation and poor access to public infrastructure in Low-Middle Income Countries (LMICs).

Study Aims

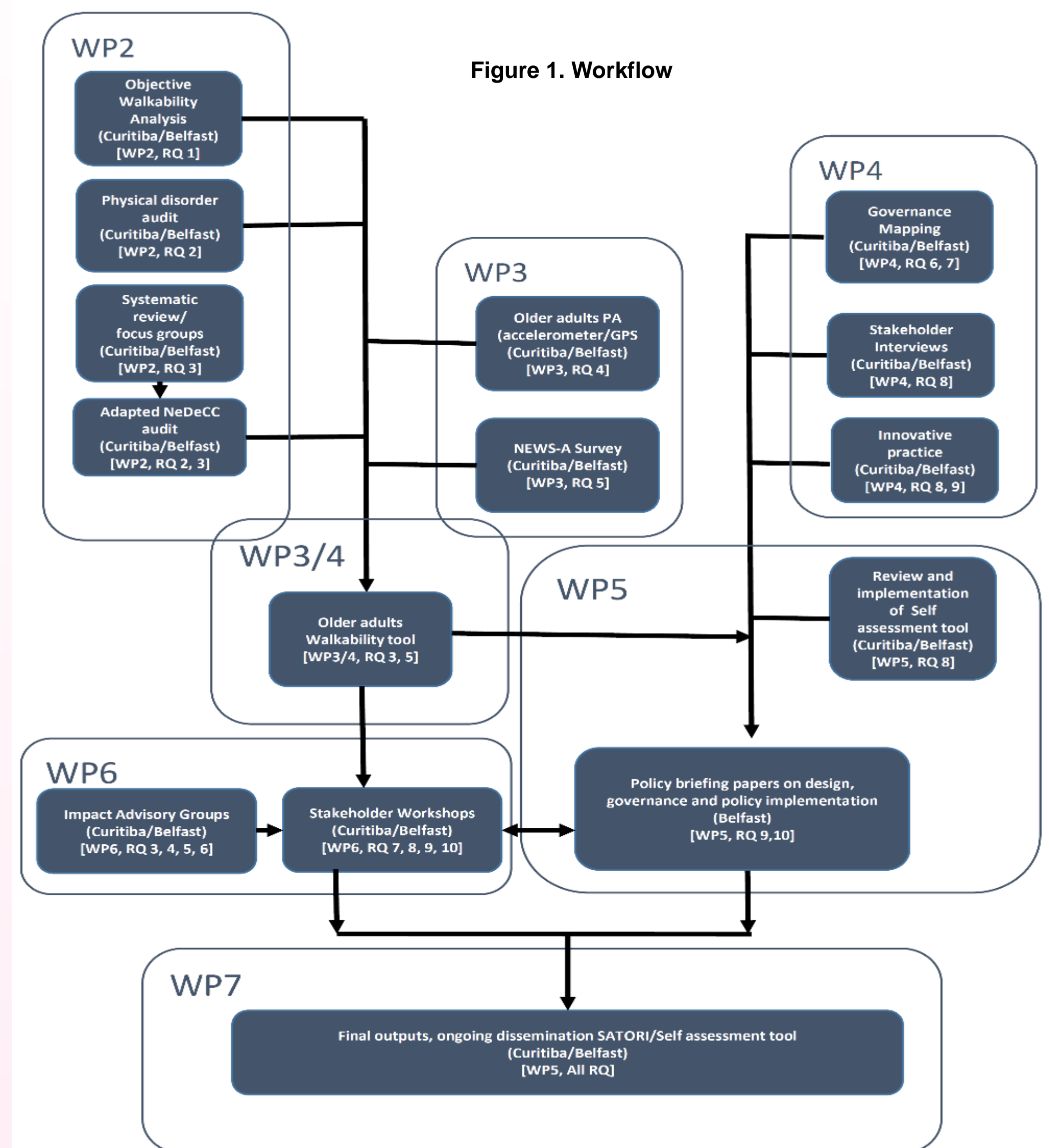
1. To enhance the conceptual and empirical understanding of the influence of the built environment on PA levels of older adults; and
2. To develop evidence and policy tools for increasing PA levels and well-being of older adults in Brazilian and UK cities through built environment interventions, enhanced policy effectiveness and improved institutional collaboration.

Methods

The HULAP Study comprises of 7 work packages (WP/s) see Figure 1. The seven WPs include: project management of WPs 2-7 (WP1); the generation of spatial data from UK/Brazil cities and the evaluation of existing models of walkability (WP2); collection of PA, health and environmental data in older adults in the UK (linked to the NICOLA Study) and Brazil (n=600) (WP3); analysis of the governance of healthy ageing (WP4); briefing papers providing targeted, evidence-based guidance on policy relating to opportunities for older adults in Brazilian cities (WP5); creating opportunities for exchange of good practice and other experiences between European and Brazilian stakeholders (WP6); and final outputs and dissemination (WP7).



The HULAP Project has 3 core themes: 1) Urban design, Planning, Housing and Infrastructure – will determine if the built environment at different geographic scales facilitates or impedes older adults PA behaviour; 2) Health Inequalities and Justice - will address specific healthy ageing challenges to determine opportunities for improving the well-being of older adults so they can enjoy independence and a high quality of life and make a contribution to society; and 3) Leadership, Governance and Institutions – will explore the governance context for healthy ageing in Brazil and the UK, to examine the capacity of institutions to respond and identify key stakeholders involved in this policy arena. The findings from the mentioned themes will then be synthesised and translated, guided by non-academic partners, into outputs that can be directly used by local government, advocacy groups and other stakeholders for healthy ageing in Brazilian cities and other LMICs.



The project takes an explicit comparative approach to research, which will primarily be focused on two case study cities: Curitiba in Brazil and Belfast in the UK, chosen because there is the opportunity to translate learning from an already ageing society to one that will experience this issue in the future.

Implications

The HULAP Project will provide a conceptual and empirical understanding of the influence of the built, social and policy environments on healthy urban ageing. Previous evidence will be enhanced and new evidence and policy tools will be developed, enhancing policy effectiveness and improved institutional collaboration. Lessons learned from understanding the association between the built, social and policy environments and PA in older adults in these contexts can provide a foundation to inform policies and practice in LMICs that will face similar healthy ageing issues in the future.

In addition, the project will enhance the capacity of researchers and other stakeholders in Brazil and the UK and will deliver a wide range of research and policy outputs that include policy briefing papers, toolkits, audit tools, research protocols and academic and policy networks presentations.

Funding

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